

Fluoride

The health benefits of fluoride for both children and adults are:

- ▶ Fewer cavities and less severe cavities.
- ▶ Less need for fillings and tooth extractions.
- ▶ Less pain and suffering associated with tooth decay.



Fluoride strengthens teeth in 2 ways:

- ▶ Fluoride that is swallowed (systemic fluoride) is absorbed by forming teeth and present in saliva.
- ▶ Fluoride in the form of varnishes, gels, rinses and toothpastes (topical) can reverse the early stages of tooth decay in people of all ages.

Almost all water contains some naturally occurring fluoride, but usually at levels too low to prevent tooth decay.

The **optimum level** (therapeutic range) is from 0.5 to 0.8 parts per million and the **Maximum Acceptable Concentration** (MAC) of is 1.5 parts per million.

The Health Unit monitors all community water supply systems and fluoride concentration data is sent to the board of health on a monthly basis. Where necessary, action shall be taken in accordance with the *Protocol for the Monitoring of Community Water Fluoride Levels, 2008*.

Health Canada, as well as the **Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry** support fluoridation of municipal drinking water as a safe, effective and economical means of preventing decay in all age groups.

The **Center for Disease Control** reports that “The weight of the peer-reviewed scientific evidence does not support an association between water fluoridation and any adverse health effect or systemic disorder.”

To ensure that you are getting the right amount of fluoride:

- ▶ Check with your municipality to see if your community water is fluoridated
- ▶ Have your well water tested for fluoride content
- ▶ Use a toothpaste with fluoride
- ▶ Supervise your child’s tooth brushing, and do not allow your child to swallow toothpaste
- ▶ Consult a dentist or dental professional for more specific fluoride recommendations.



For more information,
call the Health Action Line
1-800-660-5853
or visit our website
www.healthunit.org